

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 311609Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1414

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,PINT,UR,US

SUBJECT: SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION

1. SUMMARY: AN ARTICLE IN AN INFLUENTIAL INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS JOURNAL AND A PUBLIC LECTURER CITED PROBLEMS IN ISRAEL AND QUOTED FIGURES TO "PROVE" THAT DESIRE FOR EMIGRATION FROM SOVIET UNION TO ISRAEL IS FALLING RAPIDLY. NEITHER SOUGHT TO LINK SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION TO U.S.-SOVIET TRADE. THE SOVIET INTENT SEEMS TO BE BASICALLY THE SAME AS BEFORE--TO ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE EXIT APPLICATIONS FROM SOVIET JEWS AND TO TRY TO BUILD A CASE THAT NUMBER OF EMIGRATION APPLICANTS AND NUMBER OF ACTUAL EMIGRANTS ARE ABOUT EQUAL. SOVIET JEWISH ACTIVISTS FOUND SOME POSITIVE SIGN IN ARTICLE, BUT DISPUTED SOVIET CLAIMS OF SMALL NUMBER OF EXIT VISA APPLICANTS, WHILE ADMITTING DECREASE IN PRECENTAGE OF JEWS HOLDING INVITATIONS FROM ISRAEL WHO ACTUALLY APPLY TO EMIGRATE.
END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY ASSUMES DEPARTMENT HAS SEEN PRESS REPORTS OF JANUARY 31 "NOVOYE VREMYA" ARTICLE BY A. NIKOLAYEV ON IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL. MOST SIGNIFICANT POINTS
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ARE AS FOLLOWS:

--ARTICLE REITERATES RECURRING THEME IN SOVIET PRESS THAT DESIRE FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL DECREASING RAPIDLY DUE TO SEVERE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBELMS (1974 RISE IN CONSUMER GOODS PRICES OF 58 PERCENT MENTIONED) AND THREAT OF WAR. ARTICLE STATES THAT ISRAEL LOST 10,000 KILLED AND WOUNDED IN OCTOBER 1973 AND ASKS RHETORICALLY WHAT CONSEQUENCES THERE MIGHT BE IF ANOTHER WAR BREAKS OUT.

--READERS ARE TREATED TO MOST SPECIFIC LISTING OF NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES ON EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL YET PUBLISHED IN SOVIET PRESS. ARTICLE CLAIMS INTER ALIA THAT (A) FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1974 SAW 33 PERCENT DROP IN OVERALL EMIGRATION IN COMPARISON WITH SAME PERIOD IN 1973, WITH 60-70 PERCENT DROP FOR WHOLE YEAR; (B) SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL FOR 1974 WAS 16,000 OR HALF THAT OF 1974; (C) FROM 1945 TO JANUARY 1975 SOVIET "COMPETENT ORGANS" SATISFIED 98.5 PERCENT OF REQUESTS FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL--ONLY 1,420 SUCH REQUESTS REMAIN; (D) 1,500 SOVIET JEWS WHO RECEIVED EXIT PERMISSION FOR ISRAEL IN 1973-74 DID NOT LEAVE; (E) GROWING NUMBER OF SOVIET JEWS WITH EXIT VISAS FOR ISRAEL EMIGRATE INSTEAD TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND U.S., WITH 600 SUCH CASES IN NOVEMBER 1974 AND 4,000 FOR ENTIRE YEAR; (G) RE-EMIGRATION FROM ISRAEL TO OTHER COUNTRIES ALSO GROWING -- RATE OF 10 PERCENT FOR FORMER SOVIET CITIZENS GIVEN. ARTICLE QUOTES NY TIMES AS SAYING TOTAL OF 18,000 PERSONS EMIGRATED FROM ISRAEL IN 1974.
-- MAIN SUPPORTERS OF EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL FROM OTHER COUNTRIES LISTED AS "ZIONIST AND IMPERIALIST CIRCLES."

3. AT PUBLIC LECTURE ON MIDDLE EAST JANUARY 29 SPEAKER ALSO TOUCHED ON EMIGRATION QUESTION, CITING PROBLEMS IN ISRAEL AND QUOTING SOME OF FIGURES GIVEN IN "NOVOYE VREMYA" ARTICLE. HE MENTIONED 18,000 RE-EMIGRATION FIGURE IN 1974 AND COMMENTED THAT ZIONISTS TRYING TO INCREASE IMMIGRATION TO MAKE UP FOR OUTFLOW. SAID THERE WERE SIGNS THAT INFLOW AND OUTFLOW WERE REACHING A "BALANCE." SPEAKER CLAIMED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF FORMER SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS ARE THRONGING TO SOVIET EMBASSY IN VIENNA TRYING TO RETURN BECAUSE LIFE IN ISRAEL HAD "NOT WORKED OUT FOR THEM," BUT SAID SOVIET UNION WILL NOT READMIT EMIGRANTS "UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES."

4. SEVERAL SOVIET JEWISH ACTIVISTS, WHO HAD HEARD FOREIGN RADIO REPORTS BUT HAD NOT READ "NOVOYE VREMYA"

ARTICLE, TOLD EMBOFFS EVENING OF JANUARY 30 THAT THEY FOUND NOTHING THREATENING IN ARTICLE. IN FACT, THEY SAW AS A POTENTIALLY POSITIVE SIGN THE APPARENT NEW SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO GIVE SPECIFIC FIGURES AND DISCUSS EMIGRATION OPENLY, RATHER THAN TRYING TO HIDE WHOLE ISSUE UNDER THE TABLE. THEY DISPUTED CONTENTION THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD SO FEW APPLICATIONS LEFT OR THAT THEY HAD BEEN SO GENEROUS IN ISSUING EXIT PERMITS, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MORE SOVIET JEWS WHO HAVE INVITATIONS FROM ISRAEL ARE NOW SHOWING RELUCTANCE TO APPLY FOR EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL.

5. COMMENT: ARTICLE AND LECTURER CONTINUE CAMPAIGN TO DISCOURAGE JEWISH EMIGRATION AND ATTEMPT TO BUILD UP SOVIET CLAIMS THAT EXIT VISA APPLICATION RATE AND EMIGRATION RATE ARE BASICALLY IN BALANCE. WHETHER THE WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE IS A POSITIVE SIGN OR NOT, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT NEITHER ARTICLE NOR LECTURER SO MUCH AS MENTIONED TRADE ACT, BUT RATHER LINKED ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL WITH ZIONIST DESIGNS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, JEWS, PRESS COMMENTS, EMIGRANTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MOSCOW01414
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750036-1057
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975013/aaaaabyg.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <03 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006